Peter Dale Scott: The Politics of Global Drug Trafficking

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this is alternative radio I'm David Barr semion this program features Peter Dale Scott on the politics of global drug trafficking Crusades against drugs are a routine part of the political landscape drug wars are declared with great solemnity Zara's are appointed and task forces are formed billions of dollars are appropriated mandatory sentencing is enacted and more and more prisons are built to house offenders yet like dandelions drugs just won't go away ever since Alfred McCoy's landmark book the politics of heroin in Southeast Asia evidence has accumulated that covert u.s. involvement with regimes and movements has exacerbated the international drug problem Afghanistan and Pakistan are just two recent notorious examples of US policy Peter Dale Scott is an expert on the politics of global drug trafficking a former Canadian diplomat and UC Berkeley professor he's co-author of cocaine politics drugs armies and the CIA in Central America and the iran-contra connection secret teams and covert operations in the Reagan era Peter Dale Scott spoke at Fort Lewis College in Durango Colorado I think what I really want to focus on primarily is the extent to which global drug trafficking has been reinforced and increased by right-wing US interventions in other parts of the world especially since

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parts of the world especially since World War two and how the two of them continue to reinforce each other today I said you know this has been written about quite a lot now classic example is Italy where the Americans in 1948 were frightened the Communists might win an election there and so they went in and beefed up all of the right-wing elements including the Mafia in Sicily which at the time was almost a completely defeated organization because Mussolini nobody can be wrong all the time and one of the things that Mussolini had done had almost crushed the Mafia in Sicily the Americans were frightened that this would open up Sicily to a communist takeover and almost everybody knows how powerful the Mafia is in Sicily today it hasn't always been that way it is that way today largely as a result of US policies towards Italy after World War Two and that sort of a paradigm of what I want to talk about generally at in country after country France Indochina Thailand Central America you name it over and over again where we see a major drug trafficking today we see over and over that it is in areas where the social structure of that country has been skewed by right-wing US intervention at one moment or another now all through the Cold War of course the United States justified what they were doing by saying well the Communists there they the Kremlin Stalin is supporting the Communists in Italy the Communists in France and therefore the

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Communists in France and therefore the it's it's a completely unfair and doomed contest unless we do the same thing on the other side without trying to get too severe about what happened during the Cold War I'd like to say now the Cold War is over there is no Kremlin in the old sense anymore no certainly no international communist movement if the Cold War is over and we and we realize that we have a major drug problem in this country then one of the things we should stop doing is propping up corrupt drug corrupted

regimes in other parts of the world like Peru like Guatemala and let those countries work out their own futures and take all that money over a hundred and fifty billion perhaps quite a lot more than a hundred and fifty billion which is being spent on hopeless interdiction programs trying to stop drugs from coming into this country that obviously haven't worked if in some cases may actually have augmented the amount of drugs coming in take all that money and apply it to more humane and human based solutions to the drug problem at home I think most Americans are dimly aware that when we had the Vietnam War particularly the height of it between 68 to 75 we also had a heroin epidemic in the United States a good deal of that heroin coming from the so-called Golden Triangle when the Vietnam War was ended that flow of opium and heroin into this country fell off very dramatically in fact from nineteen seventy-five to

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fact from nineteen seventy-five to eighty four the opium production in the Golden Triangle fell from 200 tons a year to about thirty tons a year and there were other reasons why it fell there was a drought and so on but undoubtedly one of the reasons was there just weren't so many planes flying back and forth between the United States and Indochina I think people are vaguely aware also that when America in its wisdom chose to support the Contras against the sandanista regime in Nicaragua and in connection with that beefed up a rather corrupt and rather militarized government in Honduras we had a very sharp rise in the amount of cocaine that was flowing into this country precisely through Central America anywhere from a fifth to a third or perhaps even more of it coming through Honduras where the CIA was actually dealing with the leading drug trafficker in Honduras and the US State Department was renting a planes from his own private air air line set Co in order to support the Contras what you may be less aware of and I'd almost actually like to ask this audience I assume you're an audience how many people roughly knew something like what I just told you already most people how many people are aware that perhaps even more dramatically we had this problem with heroin from the afghan-pakistan border which increased from we had almost no such heroin coming

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from we had almost no such heroin coming into this country in 1979 which was the year that under Carter I may say the Democratic president is big nerf Brzezinski in the National Security Council decided to give support to various guerrilla bands in Afghanistan which he knew were supporting themselves from the drug traffic and that by official published figures the heroin in this country from that region went from about zero percent of the total in 1979 to over 50 percent by 1984 but by a secret Reagan document had already reached over 50% maybe 60% by 1981 that is how dramatic the increase in the flow of drugs into this country and it was the same story as Vietnam in the Contras all over again they same trucks in Pakistan that took the arms up to the frontier where the trucks that brought the heroin back down and they had heroin labs up there and that heroin found its way to the United States in fact there was a famous pizza connection in New York and they've been books about it a movie about it I believe 18 and 90% of that heroin was coming from the sea how many people had a vague idea about that see almost nobody far fewer people there was some publicity to the Contra drug problem in the 1980s but there was virtually none about the Afghan heroin problem which in terms of quantity was much greater and this leads to where I think I'd like to end my talk I'd like

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think I'd like to end my talk I'd like also bring it in at the beginning the problem of the press in this country I'm going to tell you things a lot of things which you may find hard to believe some of them I find hard to believe one of the reasons it's hard to believe them that there's so little about this in the United States press and in fact there's almost an inverse relationship as the problem gets bigger more often than not if there's government policy involved as there was in Afghanistan the press coverage drops so there had been something in the New York Times about the drug trafficking of the Mujahideen in Afghanistan in 1979 and 1980 in fact there was a warning in the New York Times an op-ed piece by somebody who was in the White

House supposed to be getting the documents on Afghanistan because he was in charge of drug policy and he realized suddenly he had been cut out again this was by the Carter Administration and he warned that we might have a problem on our hands well I've researched the New York Times index and there was not a single further story on Afghanistan Mujahideen and heroin until the middle of 1986 which is about the time that the Reagan administration decided that the drug problem was now so bad that they had to disengage from these Mujahideen so in that crucial six year period where the heroin went from 0% to 60% we heard exactly nothing about it in the press and this is a depressing phenomenon but also in a way a ray of hope it means that if we can rouse popular consciousness on this thing and

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popular consciousness on this thing and get the right degree of public interest in this topic we can force the press to do its job properly and I believe that that is a major factor in order to changing a drug policy which in terms of its international aspects in this country is I think still almost completely crazy and buy all kinds of expert accounts from inside the Reagan administration the Bush administration and now the Clinton administration a policy which hasn't worked and has represented a waste of money unless you happen to be interested in something else like suppressing column gorillas in Colombia or Peru that that is a different story but in terms of efficacy in actually stopping drugs from coming to this country not efficient at all now I don't claim fully to understand this problem I don't think anyone fully understands it we're talking about an illicit traffic so it isn't reported to the Census Bureau into the Department of Labor and the way other things are I just want to say this traffic completely dominates north-south relations and increasingly I believe it's going to dominate east-west relations as well and particularly our relations with Russia by converging Russia into a capitalist state we have helped convert it into a major drug trafficking area and there are very important links between the Mafia in Russia and the Mafia in Brooklyn and it turns out that as so many times before

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turns out that as so many times before so some of the key figures in that Brooklyn mafia that have links to Russia are protected they cannot be arrested the police are sold to stay away from them because they have something to do with who knows what covert operations that are still being sanctioned by the CIA it's very dangerous to try and give figures here but the CIA itself back in 1981 came up with an estimate of the size of the global drug trade used newspapers and periodicals at the time we're guessing it was maybe a hundred and fifty billion a year the CIA initially told Reagan that it was more like 300 billion a year and then they discovered one marijuana field in Mexico that this one field had 10,000 hectares in it which meant they had to double their estimate of marijuana production in Mexico and they came up with an estimate of 500 billion now that figure was probably too high because when you go to the DEA and the FBI for estimates of the drug trade they tend to give very high estimates because that's how they get a bigger budget in next year's thing so it lets it may not be 500 not have been 500 billion it may only have been 150 billions of that I think is a bit low way of understanding these in inconceivably large figures is to consider that in that same year the total legitimate trade in the world all of it every country with every other country was about a trillion dollars so that if the CIA had been right then 500

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that if the CIA had been right then 500 billion would have represented a figure which was half to the total of all legitimate trade I'm a little bit comparing apples and oranges here but I just want to give you the sense that it dominates trade and in many many different ways a figure that I think is probably more reliable also from the CIA in 1981 which was that Colombia and Mexico were generating 75 percent of their foreign exchange earnings that's $1 through the drug trade now this was at a time when US banks the biggest banks and above all Citibank one of the biggest of all were very overexposed in Latin American debt and I'd like you to think for a moment if it's true that 75% of the foreign exchange earnings of Mexico were coming from the drug trade and Citibank knew that they Mexico had to meet its debt payments to Citibank or not only was Mexico going to go bankrupt but Citibank was going to go bankrupt and this was talked about in the early

1980s you can see that American bankers might have rather ambivalent feelings about the drug trade the one country that has consistently been able to meet its debt payments without a problem through all the good years and the bad years has been Colombia because cocaine has become the number one export of Colombia and there's nothing like it isn't it for it beats coffee and it beats oil it beats all the traditional things in terms of meeting your balance of payments I think it's

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your balance of payments I think it's dangerous to go on too much about the economics I wanted to have a chapter in cocaine politics about this and my co-author who's not as crazy as I am I said look people are going to have trouble believing this book anyway and we're solidly documented on the politics and the economics is harder to document just because the CIA said it's true it isn't necessarily true so let's not put it in the book and I didn't put it in the book and that's one reason I'm sharing it with you now it's the frustration I had it not being able to talk about it in the book because I think that the economics are obviously even if we don't even if no one fully understands them they are extremely important when for example marijuana is the number one agricultural product from California which is an agricultural state and maybe the number one agricultural product in the United States we're talking about something that's important but I'm here to talk to you about the politics of the drug traffic now right now the u.s. is involved in the internal politics of Colombia of Peru of Guatemala and of Mexico other countries too but these are four big countries where we are where there are revolutionary movements guerrilla movements and where we are allied with right-wing forces in those same countries which are in turn involved in one way or another but in all four of those countries info with the drug traffic in those countries

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with the drug traffic in those countries in fact the revelations recently from Mexico have made it clear that the involvement of the ruling party PRI and the management of the drug trade in Mexico are almost two faces of the same institution and I will be coming back to Mexico later in my talk we are sending money to and troops and helicopters Vietnam all over again in Peru and to a lesser extent in Colombia in the name of fighting drugs but we are sending it to armed forces and to police forces who are themselves involved with the drug traffic the drug traffic is on our side not on the other side and in Colombia for example a lot of the of the small arms that we have shipped to Colombia have ended up in parts of Colombia where there are no drugs at all there are only guerrillas and it is very clear that our support for a war on drugs in Colombia is being deflected and converted into that country's war on guerrillas I'm not here to say guerrillas are good and governments are bad but I am saying that it is not it is being consciously diverted from the purposes which were explained to Congress when those funds were voted and particularly in Peru I think we run the risk of a another Vietnam situation where in the end the very planes that are sent over there to keep drugs from coming into this country may be the planes which bring the drugs

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may be the planes which bring the drugs back to the United States as certainly the planes sent to Vietnam repeatedly brought drugs back United States so I'm saying as a practical message if we want to do something about our terrible drug problem in this country which has just devastated whole neighborhoods and you don't have to go very far in most of the major cities of the United States to see what terrible results the the the social costs of drugs in this country is take those funds that are currently being spent down there and not achieving their goal and redirect them to demand-side solutions in drug rehabilitation programs drug education programs Clinton incidentally was elected on a program of promise to do just that but now that the bureaucracy is getting to him it things are toting back the other way now I should make clear that I am NOT saying that the see the CIA and the US military are themselves as agencies consciously drug trafficking or setting out to support the drug traffic that is not the main problem now in the case of the CIA there have been some rather hairy moments in its history we're CIA individuals have trafficked in drugs and more

spectacularly in Vietnam where an entire CIA airline Air America became the means by which the Hmong or Maio tribesmen --zz opium and heroin was shipped out to the rest of the world because they were entirely surrounded by patted Lao that is to say enemy forces

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patted Lao that is to say enemy forces at the time that is obviously added to the problem but that is not the problem that I'm talking about either the problem that I'm talking about is that as I've already said over and over all around the world the CIA facing left-wing enemy collaborates with right-wing forces who are already implicated in the drug trade and with both directly with drug traffickers and with their political allies Laos was perhaps an extreme situation but it wasn't just the male long tribesman who were growing opium and processing it into heroin to be flown out on Air America planes we were supporting we were essentially paying the the the wages of the Royal Laotian army the head of which ran the largest heroin refinery in Laos and everybody knew it in Laos but you couldn't get anybody in the State Department or the CIA to admit it and as I say that's an extreme instance but the reason why Southeast Asia has been such a recurring source of heroin is because to a greater or lesser extent we did do the same thing in Thailand in Taiwan and disastrously again in the 1980s in Afghanistan so in all these countries you'll get politically protected drug traffickers there's a word that's grown up since World War two the word kingpin what is a kingpin a kingpin is somebody who is running the traffic and the reason in almost invariably in the third world he is running the traffic is because he is the man with the

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because he is the man with the connection the man who is has made some kind of deal with the local police or with the local military it's usually the g2 or intelligence department of the military or with all of the above and who may or may not the kingpin may be called upon to supplement the amount of violence that's being inflicted on the population because drug traffickers are it's not just that they have money they have their own troops and their own troops are well-trained in just the sort of thing that the CIA frequently wants to see done in other countries killing people selectively or in a large kind of way I'm going to take a few a couple of countries and look at them in more detail but this is the overall problem and so that the result of CIA interventions all over the world even if it's not the conscious intention of what the CIA has set out to do is to create a global system of mutually connected kingpins who all trade with each other are all protected by their local governments and so in a classic way in the lair the time of the Contras cocaine could start in Bolivia or Peru where it was protected go to Colombia to be with the coca up there would be processed in Colombia where again they had connections in the government transshipped to buy long flying planes to areas like Honduras or Guatemala or Mexico and then offloaded into smaller play or the Bahamas I shouldn't leave them out and then every step along the

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them out and then every step along the line these people are protected by their connections in the government and then finally the last step is to get it into the United States I should point out that the CIA is not the only intelligence agency in the world that is collaborated with drug traffickers our problem is not just that they happen to be our agency it's also that they are certainly at this point the largest such agency and therefore the biggest single influence in this global system that I'm talking about the CIA did not invent this practice largely the problem we have here is that up till World War two a good deal of the third world was dominated by Imperial systems from Europe which particularly the British and the French in one way or another had been founded on the drug traffic back in the in the 18th and 19th century when the drug traffic was legal and which in the case of England was the foundation of the British Empire you're listening to Peter Dale Scott on the politics of global drug trafficking this is alternative radio if you'd like to get copies of this program please call the following toll-free number one eight hundred four four four nineteen seventy seven

stay tuned at the end for complete details on ordering the sort of route economy of the british imperial system was a triangular trade that when opium was grown in india they were very moral they wouldn't allow it to be sold in india they would ship it straight out to china china didn't want it but they

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china china didn't want it but they fought an opium war and forced china to take it in the name of free trade america - you know john quincy adams said that the chinese were violating the laws of god by trying to violate free trade and keep opium out of china those words and that trade have certainly come back to haunt us now in the united states when we are trying to do ourselves what the Chinese did and then that would pay that opium trade to China paid for tea which was then shipped to England the tax on tea paid for the entire British Navy and therefore was the financial key to the British imperial system and then finally the tea paid for Manchester cotton goods which were shipped to India and forced I think is the word on the Indian population at the expense of the native Indian industries that was all legal in the nineteenth century and it led to a system where the British and the French colonies in Asia in Southeast Asia and arrayed financed their government expenses by controlling what they call the opium farm they just saw to it that opium was sold in the colonies and they taxed it and when America took over from France and to a lesser extent England in that area it inherited a system in which drug trafficking was part of that imperial system the whole social structure reflected this we chose to preserve that social structure and so in 1954 when the French moved out of Saigon and General Lansdale in the CIA moved in one of the first things they did was Lansdale did

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first things they did was Lansdale did was capture control of the local drug traffic which was then run for a decade by node in GM's brother no Dinu and his wife and that was not a novelty that was a continuation of an older system I I really want to talk more about Central America Latin America and the two key countries I think now of Guatemala and Mexico Guatemala is a kind of paradigm of what might have happened in what has happened instead after a decade or so of a tyrant who Biko who was very much like Somoza and Nicaragua the Americans were happy to see him go because he had to be in a little too close to Hitler in World War two and you had the makings of a liberal bourgeois democracy in Guatemala but liberal democracies get crazy ideas and the leader of Guatemala are man's thought well look United Fruit has millions of acres of jungle which they aren't using we won't nationalize the the banana fields that they are using we will just nationalize the land that they aren't using and the result was a CIA coup which toppled our Bence and in the process destroyed the hopes for liberal democracy in Guatemala with a legacy which down to the present who what do we say 60,000 80,000 killed a hundred thousand killed certainly one of the most repressive systems and also one which is corrupted by drugs it's interesting to see that it was not corrupted by drugs right away that the

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corrupted by drugs right away that the man whom the CIA actually installed a colonel Castillo Armas was in his own way a Puritan and a conservative and he was trying to preserve Guatemala as it was with United Fruit in place the American mob arrived rather soon afterwards encouraged by the second Fruit Company standard fruit who were being squeezed out by United Fruit and they tried to get a casino in Guatemala and Castillo Armas said no the next thing you knew Castillo Armas had been murdered a new military team had taken over they were pleased to have a casino and the man who had been approached by John Roselli on behalf of the u.s. mob was now running the counterinsurgency effort in Guatemala many many radical historians have looked at the rise of counterinsurgency in Guatemala solely from the point of view of what the US government did but one of the reasons that Washington finds it so difficult now to change anything it's a terrible embarrassment now to what administration's in Washington the amount murder that there has been in Guatemala but when you get a human rights president like Carter for example who wants to do something about it the military says ok we won't take your dirty money and then instead they traffic in drugs and there

was in fact human rights abuses in some countries increased when Carter was president because as long as they were having to answer to the military they had to there's a certain amount of decorum involved you had to kill people in the

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involved you had to kill people in the back streets and not in the front streets but there was a reorganisation of counter-terror counterinsurgency all these various militaries El Salvador Guatemala under the leadership of the Argentinian generals 1976 to 1980 which was essentially a drug finance system and in fact there was a famous cocaine coup in Bolivia which virtually installed the drug traffickers in control of Bolivia the idea was it would pay for counterinsurgency all over the all over the region this was not anti-american in fact one of the people who rose to power in this period and Colonel Dobie we saw in El Salvador was someone who simultaneously went to the School of the Americas and then went to an Argentine sponsored conference in which drug traffickers and the military intelligence people were plotting together including my favorite man Mario Sandoval Alarcon from Guatemala who was very important at that point he's not himself a military man but of course the carter was cutting back on direct aid to the military so the godfather of all the death squads in all the countries of latin america in this period was this aristocrat of if that's the word from guatemala mario sandoval lr cone who virtually he forced Colonel Dobie saw on the rest of the El Salvador hierarchy and drugs were involved both in Sandoval's activities and in Dobie soles activities and if it's true in the light of the

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and if it's true in the light of the recent revelations about how not only hundreds of thousands of or tens of thousands of Guatemalans have been killed but also to one American and the husband of another which has very much brought the problem home to the United States which is what I believe has to happen this is the there has to be this kind of consciousness-raising in the United States but if it is actually the case as Clinton says that all the aid is been cut off I am sure that the g2 and the d2 of the Guatemalan military will do what they have done in the past and in fact have been doing pretty continuously they'll just rely more on drug trafficking not just cocaine which has been coming through for years but increasingly heroin because it's interesting and in the areas where of Guatemala where there has been the most vigorous counterinsurgency you now have serious planting of opium it began in a big way about the time that the Afghanistan operation tapered off and this has become a new source of heroin for the region and some say I will be increasingly important for the United States as will I want to say something about Mexico which is hardest for me to be briefed about we wrote a bit about it in cocaine politics how the the DFS the dirección federal security todd the lead security agency in mexico would say setup with the aid of the CIA in Mexico became in effect a licensing agency for other drug traffic and we

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agency for other drug traffic and we quote another author as saying who in turn is quoting from someone from the DEA saying that a little pin saying you were in the DFS meant that people in the DEA were not allowed to touch them which meant that they were in effect licensed to traffic in drugs there was a lot of furor about this rack around 1985 when an American DEA agent was murdered murdered down in Guadalajara I think it was in the western side of Mexico and it turned out how deeply involved the Mexican government and the Mexican ruling party the Prix were involved in the drug traffic and really the whole dividing up of governorships is in many of the provinces not all of them it's a way of dividing up the take from the drug traffic so that the problem of corruption is I think further much more articulated into the entire structure of the PRI than the idea that it's some remnant element that is still trying to hang on to the past and it turns out what people should really have known I think that what looks like a courageous crack down on the drug traffickers in Guadalajara or in Tijuana is in fact a rearrangement of the drug traffic you are cracking down on the West Coast drug trafficking because you are getting more money now from people on the East Coast and that seems to be that the instead of the the fight within the party being a fight between traditionalists and modernists as I say there's probably

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modernists as I say there's probably some truth some truth to that analysis but another much more cynical analysis is that it's a fight between those people who allied to the West Coast traffic and those people who are allied to the East Coast traffic the so-called Gulf Cartel that we have just begun to her hear about and are now told is even bigger than the Guadalajara cartel which we used to be told was the biggest and in all of this Mexico is shaping up very much like Colombia where we heard a great deal about the Medellin Cartel and then we finally heard that the Medellin Cartel had been broken what it actually happened was that all along the government was much more in bed with the competing cartel the Cali cartel and would never have been able to break the medellin cartel without the information and the in fact the the death squads that were supplied by the Cali cartel and it is true in a funny way that a kind of peace is beginning to return to Colombia at least on the drug frontier but that's because the Cali cartel has regained the monopoly which it more or less enjoyed before the Upstate upstart Medellin Cartel tried to cut into things and were beaten down with the support of among other things millions of dollars of US aid I just simply want to close by saying it should make us aware of how totally corrupt these systems are and that when our interventions are restricted to interventions with violence whether we are beefing up police forces or the military or counterinsurgency forces what we are doing is preserving a system and I come

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doing is preserving a system and I come back to Peru a system which is so stratified so hopelessly undemocratic that we are involving ourselves in a war that will go on for a very long time and one in which drugs is going to play a big role and it's going to play a big role because those drugs are profitable because they are going be shipped up here to the United States and so we should stay out of those countries thanks very much please talk further about media coverage of drug trafficking I have a comment I chapter in cocaine politics about this very complicated problem it isn't like the it's it's not like some countries where the government says print this or don't print that the basic problem is that particularly for the so-called press of record the the the New York Times the what the Washington Post to almost as great extent the Wall Street Journal and the Los Angeles Times their major source of information is the CIA and they want to keep it that way they are not they're not going to get up like me and just sound off loose at the mouth about what the CIA is doing because if they do that the CIA is not going to maintain its traditional relationship with them the New York Times cannot afford to contemplate something like that so and by the way I became very aware of this press problem which I think is it's really where we should begin is to change the attitude of the press and I saw it firsthand because I was in Washington for about seven months no for about six months during the iran-contra crisis I had a very good

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iran-contra crisis I had a very good journalist come to me I mean one of the good journalists I don't want to identify him but he said you know I had the Oliver North story for two years and I never printed a word of it you know why I said no wanting to hear him say it why he said Oliver North was my best source and this is why everybody in Washington you about Oliver North and it took a long time for it to be the story to be broken when it was broken it wasn't broken in the New York Times of The Washington Post it was broken I think chiefly by the knight-ridder papers and those papers will tend to be better on drug issues and things like that because they don't have as big a stake in maintaining the CIA connection and they actually you know journalism is supposed to reward you for scoops and things like that and to some extent that works with the smaller press it doesn't work with the new york times the government connection comes first i actually sat in a secret hearing and i talked about this in cocaine politics in which all of the witnesses talked about Contras and drugs Contras and drugs countries and drugs the next day the Washington Post ran a story on this secret hearing saying in effect a that this hearing had heard that hundreds of witnesses had testified that there was no connection between countries and drugs the exact opposite of the truth the exact opposite of

the truth it was so wrong that two days later the Washington Post printed a very small retraction actually congressman Rangel whose committee it was wrote a letter and he said I insist this be published and they wouldn't publish it but they

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and they wouldn't publish it but they did print a very small retraction that was from I believe July 22nd to July 24th 1987 but on July 23rd 1987 the Democrats not even the Republicans the Democrats in the iran-contra committee took the false story and made it the basis of a staff report saying that hundreds of witnesses could find no connection between the Contras and drugs which got printed up in the official iran-contra report even though the story had been retracted one day later now actually it was the Republicans that put it into the report but I began to realize that Washington is a city of games and that this was an example of the kind of games that are played with public opinion and that no politician in Washington wants to really seriously take on this CIA drug connection the man who came closest to it Senator Kerry was a committee that I was working with and he looked into the Contras but this is a long answer but but I'm really I feel this is all very important and he had a drug pilot before the committee and he asked him a question about a particular shipment and the pilots attorney jumped up and said I see what you trying to do with Senator Kerry you're trying to drag the CIA into this and Senator Kerry said oh no no no he said I promised senator Boren I would keep the CIA out of these hearings and I am NOT bringing it in now and that I think by the way I very much admire that Kerry did what he did he not only exposed contra drug connections but he got reelected and I think it's more or less true that every single politician

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less true that every single politician who in a major way has challenged the CIA in Washington senator Church I think of in particular but all of them have failed to be reelected and so that's one of the reasons that the solution to this problem is not going to come from Washington it may come from Durango but it's not going to come from Washington is the war on drugs a form of social control well first of all I imagine many people are in this room already know this and that's perhaps why you're here the United States incarcerate a higher percentage of its citizens than any other country in the world and there's some pretty mean countries out there you know Indonesia South Africa at one point Soviet Union China they're not as bad as the United States and it impacts primarily on people of color partly because it's no coincidence the drugs we tolerate are the drugs that whites like to consume tobacco and alcohol far and away the biggest killers by the way I mean sometimes this is we say we're doing this to save to save lives well if we're going to save lives we should outlaw nicotine and alcohol but those happen to be the drugs of choice of the white majority and it's changed but originally drugs like heroin well was opium originally marijuana if you go back in time there were drugs of minorities and in fact it is the incredibly racist it's partly funny but it's partly shattering to read the Federal Bureau of Narcotics reports from the 1930s about this this is the reefer madness era you know invariably it is some young Mexican American took a toke on a marijuana

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American took a toke on a marijuana cigarette and went home and killed his mother you know it was a reported year after year in the Federal Bureau of Narcotics until they got what they wanted which was the outlawing of marijuana which took care of all these old Treasury agents who had nothing to do after the end of prohibition I mean it was it was case of target the minorities in order to make jobs for for bureaucrats I don't think it was primarily target them in order to control them but I think that in terms of something you could do something about you could address the whole gamut of crazy drug policies that we have it isn't just the CIA part alone that's responsible the first thing of all are these these laws that give the judges no choice but to send people away so you know if it's a choice between having four ounces of cocaine or murdering your mother it's probably better to murder your mother you won't be in jail for as long I mean it's become ridiculous but but but that's where we are and it's not likely to change I mean it's it's the sort of thing that currently is set in concrete but it has to change and it's interesting by the way that this is an area where I see

the left and the right converging it's the status quo that was to keep things going and I never thought that you know you take a libertarian economists like Milton Friedman I never thought I would or William Buckley I didn't think I'd ever have anything in common with these people but they're saying this is terrible and we have to stop it and and it is terrible and we do have to stop it now you raised another question which I expected would be asked are we doing this in order to control minority populations I think it's more the way it's worked out than the way it

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the way it's worked out than the way it was intended but it was certainly when Bennett was the head of the the drug czar as they call it as an interesting they would use the words are if as if that's what we need in America is bizarre it's very clear that the conscious policy of Bennett was to make white middle class Americans stop using cocaine and he more or less succeeded I mean you actually do it just shows you that government policies can make a difference there was a drop in white middle-class consumption what does that mean it means that those white middle-class people who still consume cocaine and there are quite a lot of them they now go to black neighborhoods it's it's it's more by I think in direction than by design but it is aggravated the problem in the minority neighborhoods and in many neighborhoods like like Oakland for example is just a few miles from where I live in Berkeley it's a war zone down there and young black males have to be very terrified of other black males but they also be they're very terrified of the police who may just rush up in a car jump out sale I on the fly on the ground face down spread your legs and then they come and seal them all over looking for cocaine they don't bother about search warrants and things like that because it's a war on drugs and in war you can do anything well they really do just about anything to people in those neighborhoods and I don't see how we can expect people to want to live in our country if we treat so many of them this way so I think it has to it has to change that was Peter Dale Scott on the politics of global drug trafficking he spoke at Fort Lewis College in Durango Colorado in April 1995 Peter Dale Scott

00:56:03 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWnsytNfGZQ&t=3363s)

Colorado in April 1995 Peter Dale Scott former UC Berkeley professor and Canadian diplomat has authored several books on drug trafficking this program is produced by alternative radio and independent award-winning weekly series AR has produced a number of programs on drug trafficking and the drug war featuring such voices as Noam Chomsky Alfred McCoy john stockwell dan Baum Gary Webb and Angela Davis to access our catalog visit our website www.weg.net Excel or trafficking call us toll free at 1-800-455-1052 you

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